

COL. ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH AT LOUISVILLE

Speech of Theodore Roosevelt at
Louisville, Ky., Wednesday
Evening, October 18th

Splendid Audience Hear Remarkable
Address Following Parade and Re-
publican Demonstration for Charles
E. Hughes.

At the outset of my speech I wish to point out, as I have elsewhere pointed out, that the doctrine now is often advanced as to the propriety of criticizing the President, without any regard as to whether the criticism is or is not just, has no warrant either in history or on grounds of public morality. Andrew Jackson in a message to the Senate on April 15th, 1834, put the case exactly as it should be put. He said:

"The President is accountable at the bar of public opinion for every act of his administration. Subject only to the restraints of truth and justice, the free people of the United States have the undoubted right, as individuals or collectively, orally or in writing, at such times and in such language and form as they may think proper, to discuss his official conduct and express and promulgate their opinions concerning it."

This lays down the law that should be followed. There must be truth and justice in all that is said of the President, or of any one else; but less than any one other man in the nation has he the right to claim immunity from any criticism that is both just and truthful. I criticize President Wilson because his deeds have belied his words, and his words have belied one another.

Mr. Wilson's promise before election, both those made in his own speeches, and those made in the platform, have been so well-nigh invariably broken, that the breaking of them has become a subject for jest even among his own friends. One of Mr. Wilson's prominent Democratic supporters in Congress stated with refreshing frankness the exact truth about Mr. Wilson's pre-election promises, and those made on his behalf, when in answer to some charge of inconsistency, he responded by saying that "Our platform was made to get into office on—and we have won." You will find this remark on page 4618 of the Congressional Record, the Third Session of the 62nd Congress. It is impossible to study Mr. Wilson's pre-election promises and post-election performance; it is impossible to compare the diametrically opposed attitudes he has assumed at different times on almost every public question; it is impossible to compare what he says in one set of speeches with what he says in another set, without feeling that what this congressional supporter of his said of his platform applies also to his speeches.

Now, I do not regard such action on the part of Mr. Wilson and his followers, and the cynical frankness with which they avow it, as a matter for jest. I doubt if it is possible more effectively to undermine public morality in this country than by accustomedly the people to regard promises made in politics with cynical amusement as intended only for purposes of deception. A high-minded man regards a promise made on the stump by a candidate for office, a promise intended to secure the support of those to whom it is made, as a pledge which it is as imperatively necessary to redeem as if it were made in private life to a private individual; and its subsequent repudiation in one case can only be justified by conditions substantially like those which would justify it in the other case. An honorable man will scorn an untruth on the stump just as much as off the stump. An honorable man will break a promise made publicly in a political campaign just as reluctantly as he will break a promise made to another man in private life. An honorable man keeps faith in public life no less than in private life.

President Wilson's speeches are models of adroit indirect suggestion and avoidance of downright statement. But the other day at Omaha he seems to have committed himself to the statement that he was "willing to fight," but was "waiting for something worth fighting for," for something which would "put all the corpses of his blood into shouting shape." It would be interesting to know exactly what outrage on American citizens, or on the rights of humanity anywhere, which would make him cross the line between being "willing to fight" and "too proud to fight." He certainly did not regard the treacherous murder of Boyd and Adair, and this United States, as "something worth fighting for." He did not even write a note about it. The murder of 1394 men, women and children on the Lusitania did not "put all the corpses of his blood into shouting shape." His corpses did not shout; they did not even whisper; apparently all they did was to suggest to him that it was a happy occasion for his classic remark about being "too proud to fight." I am tempted to think that Mr. Wilson did himself an injustice when he said that he was "willing to fight" either for

any great cause or on account of any wrong hereafter done to this country; and that the truth was expressed the other day by his eager eulogist, Secretary Baker, when he said that he was "glad" that "no one could insult Mr. Wilson and make him go to war."

Unquestionably General Carranza and probably Herr von Tiritz heartily agree with Secretary Baker—and deep in his own heart I am inclined to believe that Mr. Wilson himself also agrees with him.

Two of Mr. Wilson's most distinguished champions, one official and one non-official, take the same view. Secretary Lane stated that the fact that "American citizens have been killed by outlaws and bandits" was a proper subject for "much regret" but not for "sacrificing the blood of our sons." Does he think that a woful admission of "regret" is the way to move bandits? Dr. Charles W. Eliot, former President of Harvard, praises Mr. Wilson for having made a "great contribution to the peace of the world and to the promotion of humane and just dealings between nations," by having "gone far to establish as the American policy the policy of non-intervention by force of arms for the protection of miners, commercial adventurers, inventors and workmen in foreign parts," and by having refused to adopt the "malign suggestion" to protect the lives of these men "by punitive expeditions and compelled agreements." Reduced to concrete terms, this statement of Dr. Eliot is that President Wilson is greatly to be praised because he took no action when some nineteen fine, unoffending, hard-working and totally unarmed American miners, and engineers, were taken from a railroad train, tortured and murdered by an armed Mexican force. Dr. Eliot has been a severe censor of political morals, strong in his condemnation of bosses, crooked politicians, and demagogic labor leaders; but no corrupt boss, no crooked politician or labor leader, no conscienceless capitalist, has ever preached or practiced a more degrading doctrine, a doctrine more ruinous to the soul and the manhood of this nation, or more destructive to humanity and justice in the world at large, than the doctrine thus set forth by this former College President. There can be no more severe condemnation of Mr. Wilson than to say that he is not unworthy of such praise. American women are raped and American children murdered in Mexico, American men are tortured to death; hundreds of our people are slain; continual torments are made into our own territory; Mexico itself is utterly devastated and its people slaughtered by the hundred thousand; and Dr. Eliot denounces as a "malign suggestion" any proposal to put a stop to these horrors in the only way by which it is possible to stop them. It would be unfair to China to compare Dr. Eliot with even an old-school Chinese statesman. If he really represents the American people, then let us by all means abandon the Monroe Doctrine, and preparedness, and patriotism, and every form of manliness, national and individual; let us leave Mexico to be set straight by Germany or England or Japan; and let us sit in helpless folly at home until some virile nation makes us what we would under such conditions deserve to be made—the hewers of wood and drawers of water for alien conquerors. But if we Americans are fit sons of our sires, if we are worthy of our forefathers of the days of Washington, if we are entitled to claim kinship with the valiant souls who wore the blue in the armies of Grant or the gray in the armies of Lee, let us treat such counsel with the derision it deserves, and view with deep suspicion the President who has earned such support.

There was probably no American outside his own immediate following more anxious to see him succeed, and more disappointed when he failed than I was. I criticize him only because by duty as an American citizen, proud of his country and jealous of her honor, forces me to stand against him. Apparently the chief claim advanced for Mr. Wilson now is that he has "kept us out of war." Mr. Wilson himself said in effect the other day that if he was not elected we would have war. Yet Mr. Wilson, through the Democratic platform, announces that "the Mexicans have made war upon us, and have murdered our citizens." Apparently Mr. Wilson does not mind the Mexicans being at war with us, as long as we are not at war with the Mexicans. Mr. Wilson's conception of war painfully resembles that described by Mr. Stephen Leacock in his anecdote of how Mr. Smith took Mr. Tompkins by the coat collar from behind and began kicking him vigorously, "and the fight continued in this manner for several minutes." The war out of which Mr. Wilson has not kept us with Mexico has been waged in precisely this manner; and Mr. Wilson's attitude has been precisely as dignified as that of the mis-handled hero of Leacock's anecdote. And the great military nations of the old world have treated Mr. Wilson, and through Mr. Wilson have treated Uncle Sam, in similar fashion. However, in one case Mr. Wilson asserted himself. Hayti had not behaved towards us one hundredth part as badly as Mexico, nor one-tenth as badly as Germany; but Hayti had neither army nor navy, Hayti did not even have arms and ammunition, and therefore President Wilson was not too proud to fight Hayti. He has taught the world that no nation which is small enough to be helpless can insult us with impunity. Are you proud of the record, you Americans of Kentucky, you whose fathers were once not too proud to fight? Mr. Wilson has "kept us out of war" sooooo! Why, on our east

ern coast war now grins at us from just outside the three mile limit, and on our southern border war has been waged on us within our own territory again and again by bands of armed invaders during the last three years.

In his great book on international law, Vattel defines war "as the effort to assert rights by violence." The Mexicans, during Mr. Wilson's term, have killed more Americans than the Spaniards killed in the Spanish War. We have now gathered on the Mexican border, and have kept there for three months, a far larger army than the combined armies that took Cuba and the Philippines from the Spaniards—and I throw in all the men on the American squadrons. There are down on the Mexican border at present more than ten times as many men as were in Mexico under Scott and Taylor combined in our war with Mexico. We have had all the bloodshed and expense of war. But we have not secured what follows a wise, righteous and manful war—peace.

The exact value of the Mexican "good will" which President Wilson has obtained by his policy of tame submission to the murder and outrage of our citizens can be gathered from the following statement in one of his chief newspaper organs, the New York World, of October 10th:

"CARRANZA ENVOYS IN FIRMER ATTITUDE

"U-Boat Exploits Give Them Hope That We Shall Have More Complications.

(From a Staff Correspondent of the World.)

"Atlantic City, N. J., Oct. 9.—The activities of German submarines off the American coast and the possibility that another crisis may arise between the United States and Germany had an appreciable effect upon the Mexican conference here today.

"The Carranza delegates were elated at the prospect of this country being involved in further international entanglements, and their attitude softened considerably."

This statement is well worth serious consideration. It comes from one of President Wilson's close organs. It shows that the Carranza Government, which owes its very existence to President Wilson, eagerly waits the opportunity to join with any hostile old-world power against us. This is the fine flower of President Wilson's policy in Mexico. He has permitted the country to be ruined and its people decimated. He has permitted our own people to be murdered unchecked. He has prostituted our national honor to the bandits whose cause he has espoused. And he has won from these bandits only a venomous and treacherous hostility to the United States.

For three years there has been no protection of our citizens abroad. The rights of a citizen of the United States to demand the protection of his Government when wronged by a foreign power have been settled by the Supreme Court of the United States, when it said (28 U. S. p. 79): "It is the privilege of a citizen of the United States to demand the care and protection of the Federal Government over his life, liberty and property when on the high seas or within the jurisdiction of a foreign government." This applied to our citizens on the Lusitania and the Arabic who lost their lives from German submarines. It applied to our citizens in Mexico and Chihuahua, who lost their lives at the hands of the Mexican soldiers of Carranza. It applied to the Americans whose property was taken in violation of the principles of international law by the English fleet. The right to life comes ahead of the right to property, and unless we first deal with the offenses against the lives of our citizens, we have no justification for dealing with offenses against the property rights of our citizens. But if we had done our duty in the first case, it would have become incumbent upon us to do our duty in the latter case. At this moment our first duty should be to see that American citizens, especially women and children, shall not be set adrift in row boats miles off our coast on the October seas, as a result of submarine attacks on merchant vessels. The German U-boats in effect established a "pacific" blockade of our coast. The "guarantee" of the safety of noncombatants aboard the vessels recently torpedoed off our coast was carried out by American destroyers, not by the German submarines; if the Germans had themselves made good and intended to make good, their guarantee, there would have been no necessity for American destroyers to be present.

At the outset of this war Mr. Wilson had one of two courses to follow. He could by deeds stand up for our own rights against everyone, and champion the rights of the weak against the strong, in all cases; or else he could submit to our being wronged by everyone, and acquiesce tamely when wrongs were committed by the strong against the weak, even although we had covenanted that such wrongs should not be committed. The first was the course of honor, of temporary risk and of permanent safety. He did not follow it. The second was the course of dishonor, of temporary safety and permanent danger. He followed it. As to the course we ought to have followed, it is to be found laid down in his own utterances, and in the platform of his own party. He has himself specifically stated, and in the party platform the statement was reiterated, that "We hold that it is the duty of the United States to use its power. . . . in the interests of humanity to assist the world in securing justice."

Believe that the small states of the world have the right to enjoy from other nations the same respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity that the great powers insist upon. We again declare fully the policy that the sacred rights of American citizenship must be preserved at home and abroad. I ask all decent men, all right thinking men of straightforward minds, whether there ever has been ranker hypocrisy than the use of such expression by the man, and the men, who, when the conditions they thus set forth were met to a dot, to a line, in the case of the killing of our men, women and children on the high seas and in Mexico, and in the case of the invasion of Belgium by Germany, instantly forgot their duty to America, to humanity and justice, and took no action to back up their high-sounding words. President Wilson has seen the lives of some five hundred Americans taken, afloat and ashore; but never in one case has he made good the promise of his platform. As soon as Belgium was invaded Mr. Wilson instantly forgot his "concern" for the rights and sovereignty of small states," and announced that we must be neutral not only in deed, but in thought, between right and wrong, and that we had no concern with the European war, and that the combatants (including the Belgians, who were fighting for their wives, children and hearthstones) were all merely "madmen." Out of their own mouths President Wilson and his party supporters stand condemned for their action and their inaction.

This case of Belgium was the first of Mr. Wilson's international sins. It combined lofty promise and complete failure in performance. It consisted of words which were nullified by deeds. In those respects he made it the precedent which he followed ever afterwards. He followed it when he wrote his "strict accountability" note to Germany and then for a year held Germany to no accountability, either strict or loose, while it sunk ship after ship with thousands of non-combatants including hundreds of Americans; and no atonement has been made for the lives thus lost to this day. When he dealt with our property rights, he announced to England that the United States intended fearlessly to accept the "championship" of neutral rights. But, as in the case of his note to Germany, he did nothing to back up his words. They were words and nothing else. He said he would hold Mexico to a "strict responsibility," and he did not hold her to any responsibility. He said he would hold Germany to "strict accountability," and he did not hold her to any accountability. He said that the English blockade was illegal, in effective, and indefensible; and he neither made his words good nor acted on them. He announced that he would insist on all our rights; and then he abandoned them all. He wrote strong notes, to both sides; and he took no action to back up the notes to either side. We accomplished nothing with either side. We incurred resentment from both sides. In just one respect we have succeeded. We have induced the belligerents to agree on one point. They agree in their utter contempt for America, in their conviction that the American people cannot be goaded into virile action to defend the lives of their men, women and children, and in their certainty that we are actuated only by the desire to profit by the agonies of our European brothers.

Thanks to President Wilson we have shown ourselves too craven to stand up for our own rights, or for the rights of weaker peoples. If we had done as we ought to have done, our neutrality would have been a badge of honor and not one of shame. If we had shown emphatically that we intended to give a square deal to everyone, and to demand a square deal for and from everyone, if we had done for Mexico what under President McKinley we did for Cuba, if we had protested against the invasion of Belgium, if we had summarily stopped the murder of our men, women and children by German submarines, and had then effectively asserted the freedom of the seas against the British, we would certainly have brought about the recognition of our rights, and very possibly would have inspired sufficient confidence and respect in the belligerents to have enabled us to secure peace before this time. Had we so acted, we would have proved ourselves loyal Americans in the first place, and in the next place we would have shown a veritable, instead of a sham, loyalty to humanity. We would have proved that our devotion to humanity was more than mere lip worship. But let it be understood from the beginning that never can we or any other nation take such a position unless there is both preparation in advance, and also the willingness to sacrifice something in order to compel the observance of the nation's own sovereign rights, and in addition to enable it to perform its duty to the rest of mankind.

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